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MILK - OUR MOST NATURAL FOODS. Department of Agriculture

A radio interview between Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Wallace L. Kadderly, Radio Service, broadcast Thursday, July 7, 1938, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, by 90 stations affiliated with the National Broadcasting Company.

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WALLACE KADDERLY:

And here is Ruth Van Deman back from a week of national home economics meetings. And, Ruth, I must say you look as though they'd treated you very well up there in Pittsburgh.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

They did, exceedingly well. Everybody and everything was very kind to us. Even the weather.

KADDERLY:

That does help a convention a lot - to have good weather. Well, did the home economists announce any new vitamins or spring any new foods?

VAN DEMAN:

No. But two of them were awarded prizes by the American Home Economics Association for their research on a very old food.

KADDERLY:

What's that?

VAN DEMAN:

Milk.

KADDERLY:

Um - milk. We still keep finding new angles to the milk question, don't we?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes. Dr. Amy Daniels of Iowa and Dr. Lydia Roberts of Chicago were both given medals for what they've found about the value of milk in human nutrition.

KADDERLY:

I wonder who made the first discovery on that.

VAN DEMAN:

That's almost like asking which came first--the chicken or the egg.

KADDERLY:

Yes, I know, people in just about every country of the globe have some kind of milch animals--camels, goats, sheep---

VAN DEMAN:

Reindeer, they are up in Lapland.

(over)

KADDERLY:

Yes. And water buffalo in Timbuctoo, I believe. If Timbuctoo is where they have water buffalo.

VAN DEMAN:

I'll take your word for it.

KADDERLY:

Anyway, wherever milk is to be had people use it.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, in a way I suppose you might call it our most natural food. I can't think right off of anything else that was really designed by nature especially as food.

KADDERLY:

I guess that's right. I never stopped to think of it before, but eggs, and seeds, and fruits, and meat, and most of the other things we eat, were just appropriated as food to suit own own purposes.

VAN DEMAN:

But it wasn't until fairly recently that we began to find out what nature has put into milk to make it such a remarkable food.

KADDERLY:

You mean things like protein to help build the body?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, and calcium. I was thinking even more of that. Because milk is said to be "the most practical source of calcium known". And it's a very good source of phosphorus.

KADDERLY:

Those are two of the minerals, haven't I heard you say, that we must be sure we're getting plenty of?

VAN DEMAN:

Absolutely.

KADDERLY:

All through life.

VAN DEMAN:

And beginning long before we're born. The child specialists say a human being begins to have an urgent need for calcium and phosphorus about seven months before birth.

KADDERLY:

As early as that.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes. By that time the tooth buds and the bone structure begin to form. If the mother and the child don't have all the calcium and phosphorus they need

VAN DEMAN: (Continued)

then, one or the other is going to suffer. Maybe the foundation for the child's teeth won't be well laid. Or the mother may find her own teeth going to pieces after the baby is born. If there isn't enough calcium for them both, nature takes from the mother and gives to the child. That's why you hear repeated again and again that recommendation "a quart of milk a day for every expectant mother."

KADDERLY:

I've even heard a quart of milk a day recommended for everybody.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, some of the nutrition specialists like Dr. McCollum of Johns Hopkins and Dr. Henry C. Sherman of Columbia believe we'd be a lot better off if we all used that much regularly. But that's a long way from what most people in this country are using.

KADDERLY:

How long?

VAN DEMAN:

Almost twice as much.

KADDERLY:

You mean we average only about a pint of milk a person a day in this country?

VAN DEMAN:

Probably less than a pint.

KADDERLY:

Figuring in ice cream and everything?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, figuring in all the milk and cream we eat as ice cream--and what comes fresh from the dairy in bottles.

KADDERLY:

And the evaporated and condensed in tin cans?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes--even figuring the cheese we eat back to quarts of fluid milk. In other words all the dairy products except butter.

KADDERLY:

And even all that brings the average to less than a pint a day for each person in the country as a whole.

VAN DEMAN:

Well, for as representative a sample of the whole country as we have. Of course you can't expect an average figure like that to fit your own family exactly.

KADDERLY:

Of course. I understand that.

VAN DEMAN:

But this less-than-a-pint-a-day is what Dr. Hazel Stiebeling is finding as she analyzes the diet records from about 4000 workingmen's families. These are families living all the way from the Pacific to the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico right up to the Canadian border.

KADDERLY:

How much were these families spending a week on food?

VAN DEMAN:

Per person, you mean?

KADDERLY:

Yes.

VAN DEMAN:

Anywhere from 63 cents to \$4.37 a person.

KADDERLY:

Then some are spending enough to buy a good diet.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes. But they could easily have made it a much better diet by using more milk and more of the other "protective" foods. As you've probably heard Dr. Stiebeling remark many times: "It isn't only how much money you spend for food. It's what food values you buy with your money".

KADDERLY:

Yes, I realize that's one of the things a family's health depends on. And, now, Ruth, I suppose we ought to issue our annual summer warning about the care of milk in the home.

VAN DEMAN:

What begins when the milkman klinks around to the back door with his ice-cold bottles in the cool of the morning.

KADDERLY:

Right. But I'm a little amazed sometimes at the nonchalance with which people leave those bottles standing on the porch, with the sun beating down on them.

VAN DEMAN:

Maybe they haven't watched bacteria grow under a microscope, the way you have.

KADDERLY:

Well, I admit it is an object lesson, to see the way bacteria can multiply in warm milk. An hour or two even at room temperature will double or treble the count.

VAN DEMAN:

And the more bacteria in milk the quicker it will sour and spoil.

KADDERLY:

By the way, Ruth, is there anything at all to that old idea that thunder makes milk sour?

VAN DEMAN:

Thunder on the left?

KADDERLY:

Or the right, I don't believe it matters.

VAN DEMAN:

No, it doesn't matter at all. Thunder anywhere doesn't have a thing to do with milk turning sour. But a thunderstorm generally comes on a very hot day. And in the days before we got modern refrigerators where we could keep milk cold regardless of the weather, and before much milk was pasteurized, that hot, close atmosphere which generally came before the thunder and lightning warmed up the milk and gave the bacteria the perfect temperature to grow in. So the result was sour milk and clabber after the storm.

KADDERLY:

And it was quite natural of course to blame the thunder and the lightning. Well, as you say, modern science has changed that idea.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, if you just follow the three C's in looking after milk once it gets into the house---

KADDERLY:

The three C's?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes. Clean, Covered, Cold.

KADDERLY:

Pretty good. Clean. Covered. Cold. That just about says it all.-- But how cold do you call cold?

VAN DEMAN:

Not over 45 degrees Fahrenheit if you have a good refrigerator. Anyway, the coldest spot there is in it.

KADDERLY:

But suppose I don't have a refrigerator?

VAN DEMAN:

Then the next best thing to it. At camp in summer we used to keep our milk in the spring where we got our drinking water. And we certainly did have to keep even the pails clean and covered.

KADDERLY:

Well, Ruth, when the broadcast's over we'll all have to go out and refresh ourselves with a nice cold milk shake. But first how about that excellent bulletin "Milk for the Family"?

VAN DEMAN:

Still going strong, as far as I know.

KADDERLY:

Then you'll handle the requests for it?

VAN DEMAN:

With pleasure--after I get that milk shake.

KADDERLY:

All right, just stand by until
And we'll be looking for you again next Thursday, Ruth. And Farm and Home Hour Friends, this milk bulletin Miss Van Deman and I have been talking about is called "Milk for the Family". It has 29 pages of facts about milk--the food value--how to choose the family milk supply--the care of milk in the home--and how to use milk in preparing all kinds of good dishes. If any of you have questions about milk, I think you'll find the answers in this bulletin--"Milk for the Family". Just address a card to Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, here in Washington, D. C., and ask for the milk bulletin, if you don't remember the full title. Maybe this will prove as useful to you as some of our other bulletins have to a woman who wrote to Miss Van Deman the other day. She said--"I wouldn't take good money for the Government bulletins you've sent me. They are invaluable".

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